

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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For Immediate Release

May 20, 2005

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on May 3, 2005, **MAURICE R. SMITH**, a/k/a “Reece,” age 24, of Carbondale, Illinois, was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Benton, Illinois, in a one-count indictment, charging him with conspiracy to distribute 5 grams or more of crack cocaine. The violation took place between January 2005, and March 4, 2005, in Jackson County. An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury. SMITH is being held without bond pending his July 11, 2005, jury trial.

SMITH’s charge carries a penalty of between 5 and 40 years’ imprisonment, a fine of up to \$2,000,000, and a term of 4 years’ supervised release.

Information for the indictment was obtained through the cooperative effort of the Carbondale Police Department, Jackson County Sheriff’s Office, Southern Illinois Enforcement Group, Murphysboro Police Department, and Drug Enforcement Administration, pursuant to their participation in the Jackson County Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. Under the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors are working together to prosecute drug dealers, felons in possession of firearms, and criminals that use firearms to commit violent offenses or drug trafficking offenses in the system that will get them the most time. The Jackson County Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative is a joint and cooperative effort of the United States Attorney’s Office, Jackson County States Attorney’s Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Carbondale Police Department, Jackson County Sheriff’s Office, Murphysboro Police Department, and Southern Illinois Enforcement Group.

The case is assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Amanda A. Robertson for prosecution.